

these funds in March, before the growers had to be put through the worries they faced this spring.

Where was the Vice President when those growers, my constituents, came to Washington and met with an OMB official and were insulted and belittled as if they were beggars asking for a hand out. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Vice President is well versed on tobacco growing, but I wonder if he understands the workday of a fruit grower?

The fruit growers in my district do not sit on their porches and rock, as they were told in a insulting response by Director Lew's subordinate in April. Fruit growers work from sun up to sundown and spend their lives praying that the weather and insects do not make them bankrupt. I wonder where the Vice President was Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker as I said, I am pleased that those growers in my district who accepted the risk and obeyed the destruction orders they received from the USDA will be finally compensated, I might add one month after the Congress voted to do the same, but I find it very sad that this Administration chooses to release this compensation only after the Vice President finds himself sagging in the polls and needing help in a swing State.

MEDICARE RX 2000 ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4680 and to say that today we have seen a clear example of legislating at its worst.

The Republican leadership of this House has denied the Democrats the opportunity to offer a meaningful prescription drug plan which would guarantee our senior citizens access to this important benefit under Medicare.

The Republican leadership has issued a "gag order" rule, which prevents the Democratic members of this institution from offering a clear alternative to the legislation which they are calling Medicare Prescription Medicine. I say, the bill before us is not that: it is less than that.

Last year, I visited with a number of Senior Citizens centers in the First Congressional District in Illinois. Secretary Donna Shalala was gracious enough to join me in August in a visit to the senior citizens residence at Montgomery Place.

At every opportunity, the seniors in my district asked me—Is Congress going to do something about Medicare, and especially about prescription drugs?

It was abundantly clear from these questions that the senior citizens in Chicago's First District—many of whom are living on income below the poverty line—that this is an issue of critical importance, to be dealt with seriously by this institution. Seriously and deliberately: not through political gamesmanship.

Last year, we were told that the prescription drug issue would have to wait until the Republican-initiated tax cut was resolved. And we

waited. And the senior citizens in our Congressional districts waited.

Last week, when President Clinton proposed an end to the waiting and offered a sound and financially responsible entitlement program to provide senior citizens with the prescription drug benefits that they need and want, the Republican leadership in the House said "No." They said we will consider a minimal proposal that does not even guarantee a prescription drug benefit to Medicare recipients.

Mr. Speaker, I will say again what I said last fall: that the Republican majority must give up this ill-conceived plan and give us the opportunity to consider a real legislative proposal which will give our senior citizens the prescription drug benefits that they need—and want.

MEDICARE RX 2000 ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4680, The Medicare Rx 2000 Act. Today, instead of helping seniors with their prescription drug bills, the Republicans sold seniors a bill of goods. Their bill is a multi-billion dollar giveaway to insurance companies and fails to guarantee that seniors will be able to afford the medicines their doctors tell them they need to take to stay healthy.

For the past year, seniors in my district have been telling me about how much they spend on their monthly prescription bills. I released a study in April 1999 which shows that seniors in my district who have no prescription drug coverage pay twice as much as those who have coverage. Some seniors are faced with the decision of paying for food or paying for medicine. This is an outrage. No senior should be faced with that kind of decision.

On the other hand, the Republican leadership in the House recently became interested in this issue because their pollster told them that they needed to pass a drug plan—any plan—no matter how flawed it is. And they won't let the Democrats offer a substitute plan on the floor because they know it is a good plan and could pass.

We need a Medicare prescription drug benefit that is voluntary, that provides coverage to all seniors who need it, and that secures the financial future of Medicare. I will continue to work for a plan that helps seniors fill their cabinets with life-saving medications, not one that lines the pockets of the drug companies.

JUSTICE FOR SHIRAZ THIRTEEN

HON. KEN LUCAS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, in Iran today, thirteen Jews are awaiting judgment in a trial that I suspect is no trial at all.

Although the thirteen Jews in question are accused of espionage, they have been imprisoned for over a year without being formally charged and have been denied the right to choose legal counsel. They have also been denied access to family members, fellow members of the Jewish community, and human rights workers. It is deplorable to put these thirteen people on trial, possibly with their lives at stake, then shut the courtroom doors to the world. Diplomats, members of the media, human rights activists, and even the accused's fellow Iranian citizens are barred from attending the court proceedings. In short, these thirteen persons are being denied even what limited due process of law is regularly available to the Iranian people.

In March of this year, Secretary of State Albright announced that the U.S. ban on certain Iranian imports would be lifted. This move was designed to encourage ongoing political reform in Iran. However, as Iran works to improve its relations with the international community, I urge my fellow members of Congress to keep a watchful eye on the developments in this case. Judge Sadiq Nourani, better known to his countrymen as "the butcher," will soon decide whether or not these thirteen Jews indeed committed acts of espionage against Iran. I am deeply troubled by the shroud of secrecy under which this trial proceeds, bringing into question the integrity of any guilty verdict. My colleagues in Congress should view Judge Nourani's decision, and any subsequent sentencing, as a strong indication as to the sincerity of Iran's attempts to reform.

Omid Tefillin, a 25 year-old man whose brother has already been condemned, said, "I am innocent, and I believe the court is just. God willing, I will be acquitted." Mr. Speaker, I wish I shared Mr. Tefillin's faith in the Iranian judicial system. Based on the proceedings I have observed thus far, I am doubtful the thirteen Jews can receive a just verdict.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4733) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a moment to discuss an amendment that has the potential to address a matter that is of the utmost importance to our nation. First I want to commend the Chairman for his hard and diligent work on this bill.

The cost of gasoline has skyrocketed and America is once again forced to kneel at the feet of OPEC, groveling to oil barons, begging for more oil. It is disgraceful that this administration has let America, the home of the free, become subservient to foreign powers. I cannot stress enough the importance of the